

IN THE CLAIMS

The following claim set replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Original) Combination of lactic acid bacteria comprising

(a) a first component consisting of at least one strain of H₂O₂-producing lactic acid bacteria, and

(b) a second component consisting of at least one strain of arginine-utilizing lactic acid bacteria, wherein component (a) is selected from the group consisting of the strains of the species *Lactobacillus crispatus*, *Lactobacillus salivarius* and *Lactobacillus casei*, and component (b) is selected from the group consisting of the strains of the species *Lactobacillus brevis*, *Lactobacillus gasseri* and *Lactobacillus fermentum*, provided that when component (a) is *Lactobacillus casei*, component (b) is not *Lactobacillus gasseri* or *Lactobacillus fermentum* and when component (a) is *Lactobacillus crispatus*, component (b) is not *Lactobacillus fermentum*.

2. (Currently Amended) Combination according to claim 1, in which the strain of lactic acid bacteria in said second component (b) is biologically pure *Lactobacillus brevis* DSM 11988, or mutants or derivatives thereof.

3. (Currently Amended) Combination according to claim 1, in which the ratio of the number of bacteria ~~is~~ in said first component (a) to the number of bacteria in said second component (b) is from 1:100 to 100 : 1.

4. (Original) Combination according to claim 3, in which the said ratio is from 1 : 5 to 5 : 1.

5. (Original) Combination according to Claim 4, in which the said ratio is from 1: 1.

6. (Currently Amended) Combination according to claim 1 comprising from 1×10^2 to 5×10^{11} bacteria of said first component (a) and from 1×10^2 to 5×10^{11} bacteria of said second component (b).

7. (Currently amended) Combination according to claim 6 comprising from 1×10^9 bacteria of said first component (a) and from 3×10^9 bacteria of said second component (b).

8. (Previously Amended) Combination according to Claim 6, in the form of tablets, sucking tablets, sweets, chewing gum, gelatin capsules, pessaries, suppositories and micro-enemas.

9. (Previously Amended) Combination according to Claim 1, in the form of pellets, dental creams and gels, denture powders, mouthwashes, dentifrices, sprays, suspensions and ointments.

10. (Previously Amended) Combination according to Claim 1, additionally comprising at least one other strain of lactic acid bacteria, chosen from a group made up of *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, *Lactobacillus buchneri*, *Lactobacillus casei*, *Lactobacillus cateniforme*, *Lactobacillus cellobiosus*, *Lactobacillus crispatus*, *Lactobacillus curvatus*, *Lactobacillus delbrueckii*, *Lactobacillus jensenii*, *Lactobacillus leichmannii*,

Lactobacillus minutus, *Lactobacillus plantarum*, *Lactobacillus salivarius*, *Lactobacillus brevis*, *Lactobacillus gasseri*, *Lactobacillus fermentum*, *Bifidobacterium adolescentis*, *Bifidobacterium angulatum*, *Bifidobacterium bifidum*, *Bifidobacterium breve*, *Bifidobacterium catenulatum*, *Bifidobacterium dentium*, *Bifidobacterium eriksonii*, *Bifidobacterium infantis*, *Bifidobacterium longum*, *Bifidobacterium plantarum* and *Streptococcus thermophilus*, provided that when component (a) is *Lactobacillus casei* said other strain is not *Lactobacillus gasseri* or *Lactobacillus fermentum* and when component (a) is *Lactobacillus crispatus*, said other strain is not *Lactobacillus fermentum*.

11. (Previously Amended) Combination according to Claim 1, additionally comprising vitamins, quaternary ammonium bases, mineral salts, antioxidants and anti-plaque agents.

Claims 12-14 cancelled.

15. (Currently amended) The combination according to claim 1, wherein said first component (a) is *Lactobacillus crispatus* and said second component (b) is *Lactobacillus brevis*.

16. (Currently amended) The combination according to claim 1, wherein said first component (a) is *Lactobacillus salivarius* and said second component (b) is *Lactobacillus brevis*.

17. (Currently amended) The composition according to claim 1, wherein said first component (a) is *Lactobacillus salivarius* and said second component (b) is *Lactobacillus fermentum*.

18. (Currently amended) The combination according to claim 15, wherein the ratio of the number of bacteria in said first component (a) to the number of bacteria in said second component (b) is 1:1.

19. (Currently amended) A method of prophylaxis or treating infectious or inflammatory conditions caused by bacteria, virus or fungi, comprising administering to a subject in need thereof an effective amount of a combination of lactic acid bacteria comprising:

(a) a first component consisting of at least one strain of H₂O₂-producing lactic acid bacteria; and

(b) a second component consisting of at least one strain of arginine-utilizing lactic acid bacteria, wherein component (a) is selected from the group consisting of the strains of the species *Lactobacillus crispatus*, *Lactobacillus salivarius* and *Lactobacillus casei*, and component (b) is selected from the group consisting of the strains of the species *Lactobacillus Brevis*, *Lactobacillus gasseri* and *Lactobacillus fermentum*, provided that when component (a) is *Lactobacillus casei*, component (b) is not *Lactobacillus gasseri* - or *Lactobacillus fermentum* and when component (a) is *Lactobacillus crispatus*, component (b) is not *Lactobacillus fermentum*.

20. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 19 wherein the combination is applied to the subject's mouth, vagina, urethra, nose, eyes or ears.

21. (Previously Added) The method according to claim 19, in which the infections and inflammatory conditions are selected from the group consisting of gingivitis, periodontitis, mucositis, stomatitis caused by drugs and/or physical agents, Behçet's syndrome, diakeratosis of the oral cavity, glossitis, sore throat, sialadenitis, sialolithiasis, pemphigus, *Lichen planus*, Sjögren's syndrome, vaginosis, vaginitis, urethritis, prostatitis, proctitis, otitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, sinusitis, leucoplakia, aphthae, herpes, and infections of *Helicobacter pylori* in the oral cavity.

22. (Previously Added) The method according to claim 19 in which the combination is applied to the oral cavity as a deodorant, anti-inflammatory, anti-caries or anti-plaque agent.